

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2580

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, UR

SUBJECT: GEORGE COSTAKIS

1. IT MAY BE OF INTEREST THAT GEORGE COSTAKIS, A GREEK CITIZEN WORKING AS A LOCAL EMPLOYEE IN THE CANADIAN EMBASSY, AND WHO HAS WHAT IS PROBABLY THE BEST COLLECTION OF MODERN RUSSIAN ART IN PRIVATE HANDS, HAS RECENTLY SUFFERED TWO MISFORTUNES. ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO, COSTAKIS' DACHA, IN WHICH HE HAD STORED MOST OF HIS CONTEMPORARY WORKS, BURNED DOWN. MORE RECENTLY, HIS APARTMENT WAS BROKEN INTO AND SEVERAL OF THE WORKS WERE STOLEN.

2. COSTAKIS HAS BEEN TRYING FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS TO ARRANGE WITH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT FOR SUITABLE DISPOSITION OF HIS COLLECTION. HE HAD HOPED TO GIVE THE LARGE MAJORITY OF HIS ART WORKS TO THE TRET'YAKOV GALLERY, UNDER THE FOLLOWING

CONDITIONS: THAT THE PICTURES BE EXHIBITED TOGETHER AS THE GEORGE COSTAKIS COLLECTION, THAT HIS RUSSIAN WIFE BE GIVEN A SINECURE AS THE COLLECTIONS'S CURATOR, AND THAT COSTAKIS BE ALLOWED TO EXPORT A SMALL NUMBER OF PAINTINGS--MOSTLY KANDINSKYS. COSTAKIS WOULD SELL THE PAINTINGS AND THEN RETIRE AND SETTLE IN GREECE.

3. COSTAKIS FEELS THAT THE BURGLARY OF HIS FLAT WAS NOT ACCIDENT AND HE REPORTEDLY NO LONGER IS EVEN SURE THAT
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HIS DACHA BURNED DOWN BY ACCIDENT. THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH

THE TRET-YAKOV GALLERY ARE REPORTEDLY NOT GOING WELL AND
COSTAKIS FEELS THAT HE IS BEING SQUEEZED. HE SAYS THAT HE
MAY EVEN HAVE TO ABANDON HIS COLLECTION AND LEAVE THE
COUNTRY.
STOESSEL

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